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A life of st. Walburge, with the Itinerary of st. Willibald

Thomas Meyrick,
Walburga (st.),
Willibald (st.)



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LIFE OF ST. WALBURGE.

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A LIFE OF
ST. WALBURGE,

WITH THE

Itinerary of St. Willibald.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS MEYRICK,

Of the Society of Jesus.



LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

1873.

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PREFACE.

THE Life of St. Walburge was published thirty years since in the Series of the English Saints, to which the writer contributed the family of St. Richard the Saxon. After his conversion and reception into the Catholic Church in 1845, he was struck with some surprise to hear of a recent miracle wrought by the oil of St. Walburge at Preston. He had deemed that, in recounting the miracles recorded in the documents from which the Saint's Life was taken, he was writing of a thing of the past. The continuance of this miraculous interposition from the eighth to the nineteenth century through this holy oil is the work of Him to Whom a thousand years are as one day.

To the Life is added the journal of the pilgrimage of the Saint's brother, St. Willibald, to the Holy Land. It is interesting as confirming, by the testimony of an eye-witness a thousand years since, the Catholic traditions of some disputed localities, and as a specimen of a nun's composition in the eighth century. The whole is taken from the Bollandists, but the writer acknowledges the courtesy of Mr. Kelly, of Dublin, into whose hands the old series has passed, for his consent to such use as has been made of it.

THOMAS MEYRICK, S.J.

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LIFE OF ST. WALBURGE

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

LOTHAIRE, King of Kent, died in the year 685, leaving a son Richard. That once powerful kingdom had begun to decline. Its confines had been devastated, and Rochester burned by the Mercian King Ethelred, in the early years of the reign of Lothaire, but intestine war contributed much to its downfall. This domestic disturbance was occasioned by family quarrels. Egbert, the elder brother of Lothaire, held possession of the throne during the minority of his young cousins, Ethelred and Ethelbert, sons of Ermenred, who had a prior claim to the crown. These holy youths, who had retired into a monastery, were treacherously murdered by Thunner, a partizan of Egbert, who stabbed them as he gave them a kiss of peace and

they were accounted martyrs. By a just retribution Lothaire succeeded the penitent Egbert, to the exclusion of his young sons, Edric and Withred. He in turn was dethroned in the twelfth year of his reign by Edric, his nephew, who revolted against him, assisted by the South Saxons. Lothaire was carried out of the battle and died of his wounds.

Edric reigned, but apparently not without opposition, and Kent, weakened by civil discord, fell a prey to the warlike and victorious Cedwal, King of Wessex. He invaded it, and Edric fell, but the conqueror retired after a defeat in which he lost his brother Mollo, burned alive by the enemy in a cottage to which he had fled for refuge. For six or seven ensuing years Kent remained without a king, or was subject to Wessex. Ina, the successor of Cedwal, entered it with a powerful army, and did not quit it until composition was made with him for a fine of thirty thousand marks in recompense for the death of Mollo. Withred, the brother of Edric was then permitted to succeed unmolested to the throne.

Thus Richard, the son of Lothaire, was excluded. Such is the account to be gathered from the history of Bede and Alford's annals concerning the title of St. Richard, father of

St. Willibald, St. Winibald, and St. Walburge, to the name of an English king. He is so styled in the epitaph on his tomb at Lucca, and he is named son of Lothaire in the Sarum office. Had he chosen to press his claim, he would in all probability have been supported by the powerful Ina, whose kinswoman he married, Winna, the sister of Winfred, the Martyr and Apostle of Germany. But Richard's name is not found in the annals of the time as taking part in the political conflicts, from which we may conclude that he preferred the retirement of private life, as far as that was possible out of the walls of a monastery in such a warlike age and people.

The history of that period presents a double aspect, viewed in its political and its religious life. These form a singular contrast side by side. The one is a chronicle of the world, with its wars and turbulence; the other a tale of Churchmen engaged in prayer and promoting the Gospel of Peace. Battles raged without, tranquillity reigned within, the walls of countless monasteries; and while it was an age of conflicting warriors, it was an age of saints. At the close of the seventh century and commencement of the eighth, England was illumined by the sanctity and learning of

St. Wilfrid of York in the north, of the scholar and poet St. Aldhelm of Malmesbury in the south; St. Theodore of Canterbury opened a school for the study of Greek near Oxford, St. Bede was composing his commentaries and history at Jarrow, St. Chad died at Lichfield, St. Cuthbert at Lindisfarne, St. Guthlac at Croyland, St. Hilda at Whitby, St. Mildred in the Isle of Thanet. Five kings, without reckoning St. Richard, descended from their thrones to embrace religious or monastic life; the young victorious Cedwal, King of Wessex, resigned his kingdom to make a pilgrimage to Rome, and there died in his baptismal white robes; St. Ina, his successor, some years later followed his example; Sebb, King of Essex, Ethelred and Cœnred, Kings of Mercia, are reckoned as saints who relinquished earthly royalty; St. Willibrord, with twelve associates, had gone from Ripon to evangelize Holland, St. Winfred from Exeter to the apostolate of Germany. No less than ten abbots, besides St. Aldhelm, Abbot and Bishop, signed a synod in the kingdom of Wessex. Everywhere in England and the lowlands of Scotland there were religious houses containing great numbers of monks and nuns, and in these the children of both sexes, especially of opulent parents,

commonly received their education. This was of no mean standard of excellence, as will appear from the following pages.

St. Richard placed his son Willibald in the monastery of Waltham, with the Abbot Egbald. This was probably situated in the kingdom of the South Saxons, and Daniel, the saintly Bishop of Winchester, was its abbot before Egbald. The child when three years old fell sick, and his life was despaired of, but he miraculously recovered, being placed by his parents at the foot of the Cross and vowed to God if he was restored to health. In fulfilment of this vow he was sent to the abbey of Waltham when five years old, and in due time became a monk. By his persuasion, Richard, his father, and Winibald, his brother, were led to the resolution of leaving England and making a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostles at Rome. In this they were joined by a number of friends and relatives, and forming a numerous company they embarked at the port of Hamle-mouth about the year 721.

To visit the sepulchre of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, "the threshold of the Apostles," was then a favourite and natural act of religion. Christianity came from Rome, and to Rome they went to make profession

of obedience to St. Peter and of communion with the Catholic Church. It was the refuge of bishops suffering wrong or persecution—as of St. Wilfrid a little before this time—the mother and school of doctrine and learning, the resort of all missionaries going out to evangelize. The letters of the Popes to St. Boniface, or Winfred, the Apostle of Germany, show the constant communication kept up between bishops and the Holy Father. Thus pilgrimage to Rome was a common practice in the Saxon times. Mention has been made of St. Cedwal, who had gone thither to receive baptism, in which he took the name of Peter. St. Ina followed in the year 726, of whom the story is told that, returning one day from hunting to his royal residence at Abingdon, he found his halls deserted and a sow's litter in his chamber; and from this scene of desolation, which his queen, Ethelburge, had designed for his instruction, he learned the lesson of the transitory nature of the glory of this world, and resolved to quit it. Ina founded the Saxonhouse, or School of the Saxons, at Rome, which appears from Alford and Baronius to have been situated where the Hospital of Santo Spirito stands, in the Trastevere, near St. Peter's.

St. Richard and his two sons, sailing from Hamlemuth, which is probably Southampton, left St. Walburge a young girl at the convent of Wimburn, in Dorsetshire, lately founded by two of her relatives on the mother's side, St. Cuthburge and St. Kenburge, sisters of King Ina—or, if not founded, endowed by them with large grants of land.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE AT WIMBURN. THE PILGRIMAGE OF HER FATHER AND BROTHERS.

THE education received by Saxon ladies in the eighth century would stand comparison with the accomplishments of any time or age. From the letters of St. Winfred, the Apostle of Germany, to Lioba, one of St. Walburge's companions at Wimburn, we learn something of their studies. He inquires how she is progressing, and she sends in her answer, preserved among the letters of St. Boniface, or Winfred, a specimen of a hymn in good Latin hexameter verse. The poems of St. Aldhelm of Malmesbury, of an earlier date, show that he was familiar with Virgil, and that he takes him for his model. In addition to classical poetry, Church history is mentioned, and a knowledge of canon law and the councils. She asks what vestments he requires in Germany, and offers to work them for him. The manuscripts of that date are remarkable for their

beauty—so that calligraphy and music, which was part of the daily routine, would give, with the studies mentioned, no mean idea of a convent education in those days. To know the Psalter by heart was usual. It is mentioned as extraordinary of the child Willibald, that he could repeat it at the age of seven.

The seclusion at Wimburn was very strict, under an abbess of great repute for sanctity. She governed a double monastic house of monks and nuns, as was not unfrequently the custom, but the separation was so complete that no one except the priest to say Mass ever entered the convent walls. The inmates were five hundred in number, as we learn from the Life of St. Lioba. This makes it more probable that the first foundation of Wimburn was in the previous century, as some place it, rather than the thirteenth year of the eighth by the sisters of Ina. But from this instance it is plain what an important influence the monasteries of those times exercised upon the age, as the schools of children, the repositories of learning, and the nurseries of saints.

St. Walburge lived nearly thirty years at Wimburn, and became in course of time a nun. She might have lived and died in holy seclusion, with no further history than that of

so many religious of her sex then sanctifying England by prayer and penance, but when she was about the age of forty years letters from Germany called upon her to enter on a new and laborious life of a mission in a distant land.

Meanwhile we must follow the pilgrimage of her father and brothers. They went in a considerable company, as appears from the phrase of "pitching camp." They were exposed to danger from the Saracens in the south of France, not yet subdued by Charles Martel, and from the Lombards, who were hostile to the Pope, in the north of Italy. But they reached Lucca in safety, and there St. Richard fell sick and died. He was buried in the Church of St. Frigidian, where he is still venerated as a saint, and his altar and relics, with his name inscribed as "Rex Anglo-rum," are to be seen at the present day. His death took place in the year 722, and his feast is on the 7th of February. Many miracles are recorded as having been obtained through his intercession, especially of deliverance from diabolical possession.

His two sons, St. Willibald and St. Winibald, leaving his remains at Lucca, pursued their way to Rome, and arrived there at the close of the same year. They both fell sick of the fever,

and St. Winibald remained at Rome, while his brother when he had recovered his health, with the Pope's permission, continued his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, then in the hands of the Saracens. He was absent on his journey and in the East for seven years, two of which he spent in visiting the holy places of Palestine. He has left us an account of these interesting travels in a journal, or itinerary, added in the Appendix, as it does not belong to this brief narrative to give it in detail. He went in company with others who appear to have been, like himself, religious men and Benedictines desirous of visiting the Holy Land and the sepulchre of our Lord. A circumstance worthy of note is recorded in the latter portion of the journal. They were on the sea between Naples and Sicily, and it is said, "We here passed the hell of Theodoric"—that is, the volcano of Stromboli—into the mouth of which, as the lesson in the Breviary, May 27, relates, a hermit saw the soul of that persecutor of the Church cast by the hands of Symmachus, the patrician, and Pope John, whom he had martyred—the tradition of that time confirming the account so given by St. Gregory the Great. The itinerary of St. Willibald to the Holy Land is one of the earliest on record, and we

have in it an account of his sufferings from hardship and sickness, his imprisonment by the Saracens, his visits to Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem, and other parts of Palestine, his loss of sight and the miraculous recovery of it in the Church of the Holy Cross at Jerusalem. On his return he spent two years at Constantinople (the Greek Church being then in communion with the Holy See, but suffering persecution under Leo the Isaurian), and from thence he travelled back in company with the Pope's legate to Italy.

This return took place about the year 730, and after that he remained ten years in the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, at the expiration of which time he was forty years of age. Meanwhile his brother Winibald, whom we left at Rome, had gone to the mission of Germany. His uncle, the great St. Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, had come to Rome to present himself to Pope Gregory III., and hearing that Winibald was in Rome, had induced him to follow him to Germany, and begged of the Pope to send him his brother Willibald, as soon as he returned to Rome, to assist him in the conversion of the Germans.

In the year 740, St. Willibald visited Rome from Monte Cassino, and presenting himself to

the Pope, received an order from him to go to Germany to join his uncle. In obedience to this command he went to Mentz, and found the great Apostle of Germany in the midst of his labours, preaching and instructing, founding monasteries, and erecting bishoprics in the wild country which had newly been brought to the faith, and by the faith to civilization.

Upon his arrival he was ordained priest, and the following year Bishop of Eichstadt, in Bavaria, where with three of his companions in pilgrimage he established a monastic house, or Minster. These Minsters were the centres from which religion and learning spread—the mother churches from which others ramified. His brother Winibald was already abbot, with the care of seven houses of monks in Thuringia, and was thus by his instructions and example bringing into order the district committed to his charge.

It was in this systematic method pursued by the monks of the Order of St. Benedict that the faith in those ages was imparted to nations. Monastic houses were everywhere established, and this was the general plan of the conversion of central Europe. The whole country was thrown under an organized system which was perpetually diverging like rays of

light further and further into the recesses of the land, centralized in abbots and bishops of districts. Such was the plan pursued by St. Boniface, who established his monastery of Fulda. Such had been the plan before his time of St. Willibrord, the Apostle of Holland and Friesland, who was a Benedictine monk from St. Peter's at Ripon. The same method was pursued by St. Winibald and St. Willibald in Bavaria. Odilo, Duke of Bavaria, and Suger, Count of Hirtzburg, assisted the two missionaries with their protection and grants of land. Thus the heart of Germany and Bavaria was converted and civilized.

To carry on and complete the work of conversion and instruction, religious of the other sex were needed, and in the year 748 St. Winfred wrote to Wimburn desiring the abbess to send him nuns from England to assist him in the mission. He named in particular St. Walburge, the sister of the two companions of his labours, and St. Lioba, his correspondent, and St. Tecla—noble Saxon ladies—intending to make these Superioresses of convents in Germany.

CHAPTER III.

ST. WALBURGE LEAVES WIMBURN FOR GERMANY.

ST. WALBURGE was now near forty years of age, having lived at Wimburn twenty-eight or thirty years. Upon receiving the message of her uncle, she committed herself entirely to the divine will, and having understood that it was the special call of God and that the whole matter was by His appointment, prepared for immediate departure. Thirty of the Sisters were chosen to accompany her, amongst whom were St. Tecla and St. Lioba. The convent of Wimburn, as said above, contained five hundred inmates, so that it becomes no matter of surprise that it could send forth so large a number. A ship was provided for their passage, and they set sail from the shores of England.

Their voyage was at first favourable, but when they gained the open sea so violent a tempest arose, that the ship was in danger

and the sailors gave up all for lost. Full of confidence that God, Who had called her by His providence, would not suffer her and her companions to perish by sea, St. Walburge, who had been absorbed in prayer, arose, commanding the storm to cease—and immediately there was a calm, and they shortly after arrived in port.

Having landed, they came safely to Mentz, where they were gladly received by the great Archbishop, St. Boniface. With him St. Walburge found her brother Willibald, Bishop of Eichstadt, whom she now met after so many years of separation. The Archbishop judged it best to place St. Walburge with a part of the nuns near her brother Winibald, in Thuringia, where, as has been said, he was Superior of seven monasteries. St. Tecla and St. Lioba were sent to found convents at Monheim and Bishopsheim. Thus the first settlement of St. Walburge was in Thuringia, or Franconia, under the direction of her brother Winibald.

The features that strike us in perusing the records of this age of the missions of the Anglo-Saxons, are the heroic courage and endurance of hardship both in men and women, their unshaken faith, and the spirit of sacrifice

from which this heroism sprang. England was repaying to Germany the debt of duty; the children were carrying to their fathers the faith they had found in their island home. Christianity had made them as bold adventurers in the cause of God and the propagation of the faith as their fathers had been brave and hardy marauders. God was not wanting to confirm their confidence and resolution with numerous miracles. With these the records of the time abound; nor is it to be wondered at that such supernatural aid should be granted in so great an undertaking; for the German nations among whom they went to preach were still barbarous and wild. They lived in their vast forests, the trees of which were held sacred according to the old Druidical superstitions: they worshipped the gods of war and thunder, and used divination and enchantments. Their fear of the latter, as is common with barbarous people, was the cause of the martyrdom of the two brothers, Ewald the Dark and Ewald the Fair, as related in the Life of St. Willibrord, or Clement, the Apostle of Holland, and his twelve companions. The two brother missionaries were accustomed to chant the Psalter together, and the wild Saxons gathered round their lodging at night to listen, at first

delighted, and then superstitious fear prevailing, lest they should be enchanted by their sweet singing, they burst in, hacked them to pieces, and flung their bodies into the Rhine. Probably for a similar reason, not long after the time of which we write, they martyred St. Boniface, their great apostle and archbishop, together with his coadjutor Eoban and many of his clergy, when he was about to give the Sacrament of Confirmation, for which he had been treacherously invited across a river on the confines of Westphalia by some partially converted tribes.

To meet these hardships and dangers the Anglo-Saxon missionaries brought great personal qualifications. They are described as striking and noble in their appearance, capable of great fatigue, and inured to fastings and privations. St. Winibald was an eloquent preacher. The same vigour of mind and body was not unfrequent in the other sex; and according to German ideas, they were regarded with especial reverence when they had vowed virginity, as receiving more easily prophetic gifts and supernatural communications. Hence it was not unusual to subject monasteries of men to the rule of an abbess, as has been already observed at Wimburn, and will be

seen in the Life of St. Walburge after the death of the Abbot Winibald.

In lapse of time, about ten years after his first arrival, the country around the seven monasteries of St. Winibald and the convent of St. Walburge became changed and civilized. He was indefatigable in preaching and instructing, his figure venerable and emaciated with fasting and labour, whilst she with her nuns practised that austere religious life which had so much to charm and astonish the northern nations. Hunters during the day, and revelling at its close, they saw with wonder the strictness of the life of the cloister, and the temperance and abstinence of its inmates; so supernatural a life awed them into respect. Odilo, Duke of Bavaria, the friend and supporter of the holy abbot's zeal, assisted his efforts among his people, and Winibald and his sister were surrounded by a population humanized by religion, who honoured and revered them.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. WINIBALD AND ST. WALBURGE REMOVE TO HEIDENHEIM.

FINDING himself in this honourable position, and seeing the district brought into order, the saint resolved to remove, and leaving the more civilized country, to seek in the German Alps a spot where he could suffer new hardships, and find a fresh field for labour. Eichstadt, the residence of his brother Willibald, was situated on a tributary of the Danube. To him he had recourse for counsel. For the great Archbishop Boniface was now dead, and lay entombed a martyr in his beloved monastery of Fulda. By his advice he chose for his new habitation a wild forest country, now forming part of the duchy of Würtemberg.

He obtained a site by purchase, and removed thither with a few of his monks to a valley amidst mountains covered with forest trees. The name of this secluded spot was Heidenheim. He then sent for his sister

St. Walburge, and founded there a double monastery for monks and nuns, about the year 752, when he was about fifty and she forty-four years of age.

Here, amidst primeval forests, these holy religious fixed their new abode. At that time the pine tree and the oak covered whole regions, and vast forests extended over central Europe, spreading around the sources of the Danube and the Rhine. They were inhabited by huntsmen, and abounded in wolves and bears and wild beasts of various kinds. England's oaks rising from a brake of hawthorn or holly, and the fern below, are now no more, or have only left some remnants to show what they have been. The woods of the Western world remain to tell us what our European forests once were.

The monks of St. Winibald, axe in hand, began to clear a space around their monastery. The natives saw with jealousy the intrusion, and beheld their ancient trees, sacred and untouched for ages, levelled by the stranger. Half Christian, half pagan, they still practised many idolatrous rites, such as sacrificing at rocking stones, and hanging upon the sacred oak tree nine heads of slaughtered animals. They had lived without restraint, and the

severe doctrine and life of the saint provoked them, and they resolved to kill him and burn his monastery. But as time elapsed, they became reconciled. The monastery began to grow in numbers, and the arts of cultivation were learned by the example and assistance of the monks. The nuns taught spinning and weaving, and in these works St. Walburge constantly laboured with her own hands, and was very expert. Nothing can be more unreal than the pictures of monks and nuns of old as drawn by the fancy of poets and romancers. The pretty ivy-covered ruins in delightful situations are suggestive of an easy and indolent life. The monks of the "dark ages" had no such easy times. The wonder is, where such frames of iron could be found, to penetrate forests and form reductions, but in this manner the Benedictine monks and nuns introduced the arts of life, and changed the face of central Europe from barbarism to civilization.

Nine or ten years again elapsed, at the expiration of which St. Winibald died, and miracles attested his sanctity. His brother, St. Willibald, was present at his holy death, which took place on the 8th of December, 761, in the sixtieth year of his age. The last years of his life were enfeebled by constant

sickness, his frame being worn down by austerities, and subject to rheumatic affections since his first illness in Rome. The last three years he could seldom leave his cell. The love of St. Walburge for her saintly brother, resembling that of St. Scholastica for St. Benedict, was great, and the separation from him by his death made the remainder of her life desolate. As he lay dying, he commended both the monks and nuns to her care. She mourned for his loss, not only because he was her brother, but her guide and director in sanctity, and because the duties and responsibilities of government, by wish of the dying abbot, and command of the bishop, now devolved upon her. She was appointed to take charge both of the monastery and convent of Heidenheim, and this duty she fulfilled for fifteen years.

The learned Bollandist doubts whether the Life of St. Willibald and his journey to Palestine is the work of St. Walburge herself, or one of the nuns of Heidenheim. It was written from the dictation of St. Willibald, as the writer attests, and in the presence of two of his deacons. She speaks of herself as a relative of the bishop, and the same authoress wrote a Life of St. Winibald. It seems, therefore,

most probable that both were the works of St. Walburge, and they are usually considered to be hers.

The characteristic virtues of St. Walburge are, first the love of the Cross, which enabled her through a long life to undergo so much labour and follow her brothers upon their arduous mission. In the simple narrative of the lives of the family, her brothers are usually styled the "Lovers of the Cross," the "Athletes of Christ." It was at the foot of the Cross that St. Willibald was miraculously cured in his infancy, and it is mentioned as a special devotion of the Anglo-Saxons, that at the houses of all noble thanes a domestic cross was placed in some public spot where the household resorted to pray. The old crosses to be seen in many parts, to which the names of Saxon saints are attached by tradition, are examples of this veneration of the Holy Cross in the times of the Anglo-Saxons. But this devotion had been very special and remarkable in the British Isles from the first introduction of Christianity, and is traced by the learned Alford with great probability to the coming of St. Joseph of Arimathea to Glastonbury, and his love and veneration for the Holy Cross from which he assisted to take down the Body of our Lord.

Again, in the Church of the Holy Cross at Jerusalem her brother recovered his eyesight ; and finally, St. Walburge chose the Church of the Holy Cross at Eichstadt as the place for her relics to repose. There is a spirit of simple but affectionate piety which breathes throughout the narrative of the visit of her brother to the holy places of Palestine, and particularly in the description of the sepulchre of our Lord, which manifests a deep and tender devotion to the Passion. To strength of purpose and resolution of character, she added great meekness, gentleness, and humility. The following circumstances related of her show her patience under contempt, her compassionate kindness, and her fearlessness in encountering danger.

After her brother's death she remained on one occasion a long time to pray in the church of the monastery. Night was closing in, and she asked for a light to retire to her cell. The sacristan refused it her ; and without making any reply, or resenting the contempt of her authority, she went to her chamber, the angels giving a light to her path, and a bright supernatural light from the cell of St. Walburge lit up the whole convent through the night until the hour of Matins. This miracle she ascribed to the intercession of St. Winibald.

Another miracle is related of her during her lifetime, while she was abbess, after the death of St. Winibald. The daughter of a neighbouring lord was dying. Her parents were in the greatest affliction, and the father, who was a rough huntsman, unmindful of the chase, sat full of grief. St. Walburge, acquainted with their misfortune, and feeling for their sorrows, received an impulse to visit them. It was in the evening when she approached the castle, and the hungry wolf-hounds surrounded the door. The master of the house being told that a stranger stood without, bid her be called in lest the savage dogs should tear her down. On receiving the message she replied, "Do not fear, the hounds will not hurt Walburge." When the Baron heard that it was the Abbess of Heidenheim, he came to receive her with respect, and being told that she was come to visit his dying child, accompanied her to the chamber. There she remained through the night in prayer, and in the morning restored their daughter in health to her parents. In gratitude they offered her rich presents, which she refused.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEATH OF ST. WALBURGE.

By these her virtues, miracles, and holy life, St. Walburge having given glory to God, and spread the faith, gave up her pure soul to Him on the 25th of February, 776. She was laid by the side of her brother, St. Winibald, by the hands of St. Willibald, who survived her ten years. He died in 786, and was buried in his church at Eichstadt. He was canonized in the Pontificate of Leo VII., and his festival solemnly kept throughout Bavaria on the 7th of July.

Three miracles are recorded at the death of St. Walburge. Her face appeared illuminated and radiant with beauty. A sweet fragrance from the sacred remains filled the church, and the torches around the bier were lighted without hands. The convent of Heidenheim was rebuilt soon after on a larger scale, and the body of St. Winibald being moved on the occasion, was found uncorrupt after the space of sixteen years.

The feast of St. Walburge is kept in May, to commemorate the translation of her relics. The first translation to Eichstadt took place in the following century, when Otkar, the sixth in succession from St. Willibald, was Bishop of Eichstadt. The church and monastery of Heidenheim had fallen into decay, and a new building was raised, but the tomb of St. Walburge was neglected. The saint appeared in a vision to Otkar, and asked him "Why her sepulchre was dishonoured in which her body lay expecting the resurrection?" and assured him that he should have a sign that he had not dealt well with her, nor with the house of God. Next day the northern wall of the new building fell to the ground. The bishop called together his clergy, and opening the tomb, carried the sacred remains to Eichstadt in solemn procession. On the way to the cathedral the procession passed the Church of the Holy Cross, and the mules that drew the coffin refusing to proceed, the relics were placed there, and it became the Church and Convent of St. Walburge. Shortly after the remains of St. Winibald were translated to the same church.

The second translation of a part of her relics to Monheim was made in the time of the successor of Otkar. The abbess of the

convent of Monheim begged of the Bishop Erconwald a portion of the relics of St. Walburge, consigning to him on those conditions the convent of Monheim. The tomb in which she had been laid by Otkar was opened, and the bones were found moistened with drops of pearly dew which nothing would soil. A portion of these was taken and conveyed to Monheim. As the procession approached Mulheim, a place where St. Boniface had resided, an epileptic boy touched the bier and recovered, and immediately "there gushed forth in that place an odour so strong and so marvellously sweet, that the senses of those who preceded and those that followed and of those who bore the bier could scarce endure it." The abbess Liubila received a miraculous cure. She was afflicted with gout in the feet, and as she slept, an aged man in priest's robes, with snowy hair, appeared to her, saying, "Liubila, do you sleep? Rise and go to the church." She replied, "The Matin bell has not sounded; and, moreover, I cannot go except they carry me." "Arise quickly," he said, "and go, for St. Willibald is come to see how you have laid his sister, accompanied with a host of angels." She arose immediately, found herself perfectly cured, and went to the church to return thanks

to God and St. Walburge. Our saint is said to have been canonized by Adrian II. after the miracles that occurred at this translation, and this is the festival that is kept on the 1st of May. Probably in those early times the fact of the translation and the miracles that occurred, together with the popular voice and the bishop's authority, were accounted a sufficient declaration of sanctity.

The shrine of St. Walburge became famous through all Germany, and a vast number of cures are recorded, beginning from the close of the ninth century, when the translation of her relics took place. The lame and crippled recovered the use of their limbs, and many blind received their sight. In the year 896 a girl blind from her birth was given her eyesight. Others were restored from gout, dropsy, and paralysis. Miracles almost of a playful character are recorded. One who prayed in her church at Mass with his gauntlets on his hands, found them suddenly gone, and some days after saw them lying beside him. A little girl of the convent was cured of her fondness for play by the ball remaining fast to her hand, from which she was freed by praying at the shrine. A woman who spun on holidays was corrected in the same manner.

by the ball of wool clinging to her hand until she was freed by the intercession of St. Walburge.

But the most remarkable and continual miracle, for which she is still renowned, is that which reckons her among the saints who are called *eleophori*, or whose bones distil a miraculous oil. Among these are said to have been St. Andrew the Apostle, the lover of the Cross, St. Matthew the Evangelist, St. Nicholas of Myra, celebrated for his compassion, and St. John the Almsgiver; to these may be added St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Euphemia of Byzantium, and St. Agnes of Tuscany. These were all distinguished by the gift of piety and mercy, and this was the special characteristic of St. Walburge, a tender piety and compassion.

It is not merely a pious imagination, but a custom consecrated by Catholic usage and faith, to attribute to certain saints special gifts and prerogatives, to have recourse to them in particular wants, and for particular remedies. Their lives are not all the same, nor their virtues of the same character. The grace of God, which works in them all, is multiform, producing fruits suitable to every age and people. Some are examples of simplicity and

poverty, some of meekness and forgiveness, some of long suffering and patience; others are merciful, others penitent, or patterns of innocence, according to the changes of times and the necessities of the world. The flow of pure oil from the relics of St. Walburge, especially from the breast-bone, continuing for a thousand years, and working innumerable cures to the present day, may be justly considered an emblem of the piety and mercy and lively faith of the saint herself, who was an example of that true type of a gentle and affectionate, but manly and courageous heart, raised by the love of the Cross to heroic patience in sufferings.

Her first sorrow was her separation at an early age from all her family, when she was left in England at the departure of her father and brothers. After a peaceful life of many years at Wimburn, she is separated from it by a call to a distant and arduous mission. She joins her brother in Franconia, and is no sooner settled there than again she is summoned to follow him to the depths of the German forests. Lastly, she is separated from her saintly brother to bear the burden of the Cross alone. These are the successive forcings of the olive press beneath the weight of which

that gentle but generous soul gave forth its virtues of patience and charity.

Her life may be considered as active rather than contemplative, yet it was spent in seclusion for the most part. The history of this interior life, except in rare instances, is never told. The fragments that come to us of saints' lives are mostly the external marks of sanctity ; hence the complaint that they are full of miracles. Their secret history of cloistered life, apparently so monotonous, but so full of true and varied interest, is unknown.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OIL OF ST. WALBURGE.

THE oil of St. Walburge distils from the coffer in which her relics are inclosed, in her church of Eichstadt; the principal relic is the pectoral, or breast-bone. "You may see," says Philip, the Bishop of Eichstadt, who was himself miraculously cured at point of death by the holy oil, "the drops, sometimes larger sometimes less, dropping into the silver bowl from beneath the stone slab on which they hang. If the holy oil, when carried away, is handled irreverently, or in any way treated disrespectfully, it disappears. It must be kept with reverence, and stored in a holy place. If the vessel is not placed under to receive it, the oil hangs clustering like honey in a comb, refusing to fall; nor will it run unless the phial to receive it be clean." When the church of Eichstadt was laid under an interdict on account of the aggressions of the neighbouring nobles on the rights of the bishops, the oil

ceased. Nor did it flow again until, after the interdict had been removed, the bishop, bare-foot and having proclaimed a fast, went publicly to pray that the city might not be deprived of such a benefit, and upon the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice the oil flowed again. This is another property of the miraculous oil, that it flows more freely during the time of Mass and the festivals of the saint.

The pious and laborious Gretser has written at length the miracles worked by the oil of St. Walburge, and adduced abundant evidence to prove its miraculous power. To those who do not believe, the most evident proofs are absurdities, and to those who have faith argument would be superfluous. But there is a strong presumption in favour of such miracles as last through a long duration of ages. It is hard to suppose that men will deceive, or that men can be deceived, for a thousand years together. The blood of St. Januarius has continued to flow year by year for centuries; the well of St. Winefride is still miraculous; and cures are still obtained by the oil of St. Walburge. It is hard for the blindest prejudice to resist evidences of this nature if only it will give them fair consideration.

One of the frequent miracles of the oil of St. Walburge is restoration of the sight. George Muller, a citizen of Eichstadt, a fuller by trade, had for many years been nearly blind, and by application of some pretended remedy, became completely so for four months. By three times applying the oil of St. Walburge, he recovered his sight. It is related of him that both before and after his cure, he never permitted a blind man to leave his door without an alms.

A Lutheran soldier who robbed the shrine of St. Walburge was struck blind, and his companion went mad. They were both restored at the shrine of the saint, the one to his eyesight and the other to his senses, and became converts to the Catholic faith.

Many other miracles of restoration of eyesight and of the use of the limbs recovered, too numerous to be inserted, are recorded; but instances occur in our own time and country to enliven our faith. And it ought to awaken our gratitude that the names of our ancient English saints, long almost forgotten, are again remembered, and their glorious deeds recalled after the lapse of ages. In the lives of saints the least part is known and the greater part is concealed, and this is the case

even with those whose history is best known: their secret is with God, and remains to form part of what will be revealed hereafter in a better life, much more is it true of those who are removed from us by many ages that have elapsed, and of whom we have but scanty notices even as to the principal facts of their lives. But the glory of their miracles speaks with a clear voice, that cannot be mistaken, of the greatness of their virtues and glory with God. It is a consolation to believe that the merits of so many holy confessors, so many virgins, so many martyrs of England, are in remembrance before Him, and that, notwithstanding its errors and sins, He will one day look again with compassion on our country, and give it the light of faith to open its eyes and restore to its misdirected powers their legitimate use, that it may employ its noble energies in His cause, and for the glory of His Name.

APPENDIX.

The Journey of St. Willibald to the Holy Land.

WRITTEN AT HEIDENHEIM, CIRC. ANN. 760.

PREFACE.

OF THE NUN OF HEIDENHEIM.

To the venerable priests and deacons, abbots, and brethren beloved in Christ, whom our holy bishop, as a good captain and tender father, has appointed throughout his diocese, some in the order of priesthood, others chaste Levites, others monks and novices, to all these living in holy religious observance, I, an unworthy Sister, of Saxon lineage, last and least in life and manners, venture to write, and for the sake of memorial give to you, Catholic and religious men, ministers of the Word of God, a brief account of the early life of the venerable Willibald. Notwithstanding my want of wisdom and erudition, and the weakness of my sex, I am desirous, according to my poor power, of gathering some few flowers from the blooming abundance of his virtues, and composing for you a lasting memorial of them. And here I repeat, it is not my presumption that

impels me to attempt this task on which I scarce dare to venture, but relying on your high authority and kindness, I propose, with the aid of God's grace, to describe the marvels of the Word Incarnate, and the scenes of the Gospel narrative which the venerable Willibald visited and beheld with his own eyes, and trod with his feet, in the very footsteps of Him Who was born into this world, suffered, and rose again for us; of all which he has given us a faithful narrative. Therefore it seems right that we should not be silent, nor suffer to pass into oblivion, the things that God has shown His servant in these our times. For we heard them dictated by his own mouth, in the presence of two deacons as witnesses, on the 20th of June, the day before the summer solstice.

Indeed, I know that it may seem boldness on my part to write, when there are so many more excellent than myself, and holy priests, capable of doing so, but nevertheless, as their humble relative and the least of their race, I would commit to memory something of the acts and travels of these venerable men—the one of whom is our high priest, pastor, and bishop, the great Master Willibald, lover of the Cross, and the other is abbot, priest, and

glorious servant of Christ, Winibald, guide in the path of perfection, missionary to the people, and bold rebuker of sin. Hoping, therefore, to find excuse and indulgence, by your kindness and favour, and looking for help to the grace of God, I present to you their history, traced in letters of ink, to the glory of God, the Giver of all good.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE OF ST. WILLIBALD.

FIRST, then, I will relate the early life of the venerable bishop and pious servant of God, Willibald, and, beginning from his infancy, will follow it to his old age, now far advanced.

Nurtured by his parents with tender care, he arrived at the age of three years, when he was taken with such violent sickness as to be brought to extremity. His father and mother, seeing he was about to die, were exceedingly grieved at the likelihood of the loss of their tender child, whom they hoped to leave as their successor and heir. Yet it was not the will of the almighty and merciful God that he should die in his infancy, but live to instruct others in His law.

Accordingly, to continue, they being in very great fear and grief, made an offering of the child before the holy Cross of God our Saviour. For such is the custom of the Saxon

nation, that on the estates of the noble and good they have commonly the emblem of the holy Cross in place of a church, dedicated to the worship of God, erected in a lofty place, to be frequented for the purpose of daily prayer. Placing him there before the cross, they earnestly besought God, the Creator of all things, to save his life by His almighty power; and they promised on their part, that if his health were restored, he should, as soon as possible, receive the tonsure, and be dedicated to the service of Christ as a monk and soldier of God. So when the noble child had come to the age of five years, and showed already wisdom before its time, they hastened to fulfil their vow, and to send him to begin his monastic life, having first obtained the consent of their relatives and adherents. And they committed him to the care of the faithful and venerable Theodred to take him to the monastery, and make all due provision for him. When, therefore, they came to the abbey called Waltham, they delivered him to the keeping of the venerable abbot of the monastery, Egbald by name, to live subject and obedient to his rule. And immediately the abbot summoned together the monks according to custom, and asked them whether they were willing

and of one mind to receive him amongst them ; and they all signified their willingness.

Forthwith the wise and gracious child began to learn by rote the Psalms of David, and other books of the holy law, whilst he was so young, fulfilling the words of the Prophet, "From the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." And as he grew in stature, he grew also in grace, being wholly turned to the love of God, and meditating on the Scriptures day and night, while he considered the monastic rule, and how one day he should become a monk, joining the blessed company of religious men.

Meanwhile he began to ponder how he could most effectually leave the world with its riches and possessions, his parents and relations, country and home, by making a pilgrimage to a strange land. And when he had passed, by God's grace, the dangerous and slippery years of early youth, and reached manhood, his gentle behaviour and obedience had gained the love of all the brethren, so that he was highly honoured and esteemed among them, making daily progress in study and strict observance. Then it was that, as said above, eagerly desiring to make a pilgrimage to distant lands, he opened his secret

thought to his father by the ties of consanguinity, and besought him not only to grant his leave to the request, but himself also to accompany him in pilgrimage. And at first, when he thus urged his father to forsake the uncertain riches of the world and to enter into the service of the heavenly warfare, leaving home and family, and seeking the glorious threshold of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, he would not, but said that it was unfatherly to leave his children and wife, and leave them defenceless to others. But the young soldier of Christ our Lord continued to plead in behalf of the austere religious life, dwelling upon the terrors of eternity and the hopes of everlasting happiness in heaven, until he so wrought upon his mind, that in the end he prevailed, and his father and brother Winibald gave their promise to accompany him.

So when the summer was commencing, he and his father and youthful brother set out upon their pilgrimage. And having made all ready with provisions for the way, they came with a numerous company of friends and fellow-travellers to the appointed place, called Hamle-muth, near the mart called Hamwich. Then, the wind and tide favouring, they went

on board a vessel, with its captain and crew hired to receive them. After a quick passage across the dangers of the sea, they came to land, and there pitched camp, setting up their tents on the banks of the river Seine, near a town called Rouen, where there is a mart.

Having rested there some days, they proceeded onwards, visiting the shrines of many saints upon their way, until at length they came to the Gorthonic land,* and after that to Lucca. Thus far St. Willibald and St. Wini-bald brought their father with them, and there he was taken with sudden sickness to death, and it became so sore, that he died; and his sons, having wrapped in fair burial cloths the body of their father, laid it in the tomb in the city of Lucca, at the Church of St. Frigidian. In that place the body of their father sleeps in peace.

Proceeding forward in haste, over mountains and valleys of Italy, they passed in safety, by the aid of God and the saints, the Alpine heights, with all their company and comrades, secure from the dreaded ambush of enemies, and came to the glorious threshold and renowned patronage of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. And there they gave great thanks to Almighty

* Probably Lombardy is meant.

God, that having passed the dangers of the sea and the harms to which pilgrims are exposed, they had safely reached the "ladder" of scholarly learning, and the sight of the glorious Basilica of St. Peter. Then the two brothers remained there from Martinmas till the next Easter, occupied during the winter, until the spring and the joyous burst of the Easter festival, in the exercises of religious monastic life. But as the heats of summer came on, they were both taken with ague fever, so that they were brought to extremity; yet, by the merciful providence of God, they lay sick alternate weeks, so that they could wait in turn upon each other. And still they persevered in practices of religious observance and recitations, according to the words of truth, "He that perseveres to the end shall be saved." Then, after his recovery, the glorious lover of the Cross, looking up to heaven, and pursuing perfection, ardently desired to proceed yet further upon a more unfrequented pilgrimage, and petitioned leave and prayers of his fellow-countrymen, that he might set forth and arrive safe at the walls of the lovely and delectable city of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY FROM ROME TO JERUSALEM.

ACCORDINGLY, as soon as the Easter solemnities had again passed, the eager athlete, with his two companions, arose to commence his journey. And they went eastward to Tarra-cina, where they rested two days, and from thence to Gaieta on the sea shore, crossing the bay to Naples, where they stayed two weeks. These cities belong to the Romans, though they are in the kingdom of Beneventum. There they found, by God's good providence, a ship from Egypt, on which they embarked and sailed to Reggio, a city of Calabria. Having stayed there two days, they set sail, and came to the isle of Sicily and city of Catana, where the body of St. Agnes, virgin martyr, reposes. Hard by is Mount Etna, whose fires at times spread devastation over that country; and then the people of that city take the veil of St. Agatha, and with it stop the progress of the flames.

There they abode three weeks, and setting sail from thence, crossed the Adriatic Sea to Manafasia,* in the Slavonic land, and from thence they sailed to Chios, leaving Corinth on the left, and from Chios they came to Samos. From it they crossed to Ephesus on the sea shore, one mile from the sea. Thence they went on foot to the place where the seven sleepers repose, and walked on to the Church of St. John the Evangelist, situated in a delightful spot near Ephesus. From St. John's they walked two miles along the coast to a town of great size, called Figila. And they tarried there one day, and having begged some bread, went to a fountain in the midst of the city, and sitting beside it on the margin of the basin, they dipped the bread in the water, and so ate of it. Proceeding on foot from thence along the sea, they came to the city Strobole,† standing on a lofty mountain. And from thence to a place called Patara; in which they stayed until the season of winter was over. From Patara they took ship to a city called Militena.‡ This place was once in peril of

* The coast of Albania was at that time in the possession of the Slavonians.

† Boudroom, or Halicarnassus.

‡ The country round the river Melas was called Militena.

being destroyed by a flood, and two hermits dwelt there, being Stylites—that is, upon a pillar or wall of stone built very high, so that the waters could not reach them. And there, being without food, they were near being starved to death; but the Almighty Pastor of His people mercifully gave food to His poor. From this place they sailed to Cyprus, an island which lies between the Greeks and the Saracens. And they came to the city Paphos, and stayed there a week. And thus ended the first year of pilgrimage.

From Paphos they went to Constantia, in which city St. Epiphanius lies at rest; and they stayed there until the Nativity of St. John Baptist was over. From thence, setting sail, they came to the country of the Saracens, to the city of Tarratas on the sea,* and proceeded on foot from thence to the castle of Ortha, a distance of twelve miles. There they found a bishop of the Greeks, and they had Mass according to the Greek rite. Proceeding from thence, they walked inland twelve miles to the city of Emesa, where is a large church built by St. Helena in honour of St. John the Baptist, and his head was a long time preserved there—that is to say, in the land of Syria.

* Tortosa, in Tripoly.

Now there were at this time with St. Willibald seven companions of his own country, Saxons, and he was the eighth. Whereupon the heathen Saracens, perceiving that strange men and foreigners had come thither, laid hold of them and put them in ward, because they knew not whence they came, but took them for spies. And they led them before the presence of a rich old man to examine them who they might be. And he inquired of them whence they came, and what was their business. And they declared from the beginning the cause of their journey. Then the old man answered and said: "I have seen heretofore men of the same country as these coming hither from those parts, and they come for no evil purpose, but to fulfil their law." Then they went to the palace of the King to ask permission to go to Jerusalem. But whilst they were detained in prison, by God's merciful providence, Who protects His own in captivity and perils from their enemies, there came a merchant who, for the redemption of his soul by almsgiving, would have ransomed them and let them go free, but could not, and he sent them dinner and supper daily, and every fourth and seventh day of the week sent his son to lead them from the prison to the bath and back

again, and on the Lord's day took them to the church through the mart, that they might see and purchase what they pleased, for which he paid. And the citizens of the place came in numbers to behold them, for they were fair youths, and handsomely attired.

There came also a Spaniard to visit them in prison and converse with them. In answer to his inquiries, they told him who they were, and whence they came, and all that had befallen them in their journey. The Spaniard had a brother who was chamberlain in the palace of the King of the Saracens. Accordingly, when the alderman who had put them in prison went with them to the palace, the Spaniard and the captain of the ship with whom they sailed from Cyprus came also, and they all stood before the King of the Saracens, who is called Mirmumni* (Commander of the Faithful). When their cause was heard, the Spaniard bid his brother to explain the matter to the King, and plead their cause. Then the King asked whence the men came? and was told in reply, "They come from the land of the west, where the sun sinks into the sea—and beyond them is no land known, only the sea." And the King spoke, saying, "For what reason

* Emir-al-Mumanim, Commander of the Faithful.

should we punish them, they have done us no wrong. Give them, therefore, leave to go upon their way."

So they were let go free, but the others in prison with them were required to pay three pounds in ransom; they were men of Cyprus not bearing arms, for there was peace and amity between the Greeks and Saracens. That region is large in extent, and there were twelve bishoprics there. Having received permission, they departed from Emesa and went to Damascus, a journey of a hundred miles. It is situated in the land of Syria, and there rests the body of St. Ananias. They tarried there one week. And two miles out of Damascus is a church, the place of the conversion of St. Paul, where the Lord said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and having prayed there, they went on their pilgrimage into Galilee, until they came to the place where Gabriel first came to St. Mary with the salutation, "Hail, full of grace." A church now stands over the spot, and the name of the town is Nazareth. The heathen would many times have destroyed the church, but the Christians as often ransomed it. There, having commended themselves to the Lord, they passed on, walking on foot to Cana, where the Lord

turned water into wine. A great church stands there, and in the church an altar, composed of one of the six water pots filled with water, by our Lord's command, which was changed into wine, and of that they received some. They stayed there one day, and proceeded from thence to Mount Thabor, where the Lord was transfigured. Upon it stands a monastery, and the church upon the summit is dedicated to the Lord and to Moses and Elias. The citizens of the place call it Agemons, the Holy Mount. Having prayed, they passed on to the city of Tiberias, situated upon the shore of that sea over which the Lord walked as on dry land, but Peter walking upon it sank. In that city there are many churches, and a synagogue of the Jews; but the Lord's day is solemnized with much honour. They tarried there some days. And thereby the Jordan flows to its outlet through the midst of the sea. From thence they coasted along the shore, and passed by the town of Mary Magdalen, until they came to Capharnaum, where the Lord raised to life the ruler's daughter. There was a house there, and much wall standing, in which the people of the place said that Zebedee abode, and his two sons James and John. From Capharnaum they came to Bethsaida, the city

of Peter and Andrew, in which a church now stands over the place where their house was. Having stayed the night, they went on to Chorozaïm, where the Lord cured the possessed and sent the devil into the herd of swine. In this city there was a church of the Christians, and having prayed there, they proceeded until they came to the place where two fountains take their rise, Jor and Dan, and these flowing from the mountain sides, join into one river and make the Jordan. And there they stayed a night between the two sources of Jordan, and the shepherds gave "us sour milk to drink; and there we saw cattle of a strange form, with long backs, short legs, and very large horns, all of one red colour, which, when the midday heat is great, rise and go down to the deep pools in that place, and plunge in so that the head alone is visible above water." Proceeding, they went on to Cesarea Philippi, where there is a church and a great number of Christians. And again setting forth, they came to the monastery of St. John the Baptist, where they found about twenty monks. And they rested there a night, and went on from thence more than a mile distance to the Jordan, where the Lord was baptized. A church stands there now, raised

upon pillars of stone over the spot where our Lord was baptized; and there they now baptize. Beneath the church is dry ground, a wooden cross stands in the midst, a streamlet of water is brought in by a sluice, and a rope stretched across the Jordan is made fast on either side. Thus in the solemnity of the Epiphany, the sick and infirm hold by the rope, and are dipped into the water. The barren also receive the gift of childbearing. Our bishop, Willibald, bathed in that place in the Jordan. Proceeding from thence five miles, they came to Gilgal, where stands a church of wood of no great size, in which are the twelve stones which the children of Israel took and carried thus far from the Jordan in memory of their passage. Having prayed there, they went on to Jericho, which is above seven miles from the Jordan. There flows the fountain, rising from a mountain ridge whose waters were barren until the Prophet Eliseus blessed them; after which the city made use of it to water fields and gardens by irrigation and all other purposes, for its waters bring with them fertility and salubrity from the blessing of Eliseus.

From Jericho they came to the monastery of St. Eustachius, situated in the valley midway between Jericho and Jerusalem. Leaving this,

he came to Jerusalem, to the place where the Cross of the Lord was found. Over it now stands a church built upon Mount Calvary, which was previously outside of Jerusalem ; but the blessed Helena, when she found the Cross, encompassed the place so as to be within the walls of Jerusalem. Outside of the church, against the eastern wall, stand three wooden crosses in memory of the holy Cross of Christ and those who were crucified with Him. These crosses are not within the church, but stand outside close under the roof, and beside the church is the garden in which was the sepulchre of our Lord. This sepulchre was hewn out of the rock, and of that rock there stands a portion above ground, quadrangular at the base, and rising in a pyramidal form, and on the summit is a cross, and over it is built a glorious church. On the east side of this rock of the sepulchre is a door by which one enters to pray, and the tomb of stone is within, whereon the Body of the Lord was laid. And there stand upon it fifteen golden bowls full of oil, burning night and day. The said tomb is on the north side within the rock of the sepulchre, on the right hand of one who enters to pray. Before the door lies a great square stone, like the stone which once the angel rolled back from the door

of the sepulchre. And soon after he came there he fell sick, and lay until a week before Christmas ill of that sickness, from which, as soon as he had somewhat recovered, he rose and went to the church called Holy Sion, which stands in the midst of Jerusalem, and having prayed there, he went to the porch of Solomon. Then to the pool where the sick lay waiting for the moving of the water into which the first who descended was healed ; where the Lord said to the paralytic, "Take up thy bed and walk."

He also narrated, that in front of the gate of the city there stands a great pillar, and on the top of it a cross, for a sign and memorial, upon the spot where the Jews would have seized the body of the holy Virgin Mary. For when the eleven Apostles bearing the body of the holy Virgin Mary were carrying it out of Jerusalem, as they came out of the gate of the city, the Jews would have laid hands upon it, but the men who stretched forth their hands to lay hold of the bier and stay its passage remained with their arms outstretched and motionless, as though they stuck fast to the bier, neither could they draw them back until, by the mercy of God, at the Apostles' prayer, they were loosed, and so they suffered it to

pass on. The holy Virgin Mary made her transit out of this life in the place called Holy Sion, in the midst of Jerusalem, and then the eleven Apostles, as said above, carried her forth, and the angels came and took her from the hands of the Apostles and bore her to heaven.

CHAPTER III.

FROM JERUSALEM TO MONTE CASSINO.

THEN the bishop, Willibald, went down into the Valley of Josaphat. This lies to the east, outside of the city Jerusalem. In that valley is the Church of the Holy Virgin, and in the church her tomb, not that her body rests in it, but it is for a memorial of her. And having prayed there he ascended to Mount Olivet, which is over against the valley on the eastern side. The valley is between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet, and on the ascent of the mountain stands a church, on the place where the Lord prayed before His Passion and said to His disciples, "Watch and pray." From thence he went up to the church on the summit where the Lord ascended into heaven. And in the midst of the church stands a piece of finely-sculptured bronze, in form quadrangular. It stands on the central spot where our Lord ascended, and in the middle of the bronze is

a hollow four-square, in which is a lanthorn, or light, inclosed with glass, and it is so inclosed that it may burn always, both in wet and dry, for the church is open above and without a roof. Moreover, two pillars stand in the church against the wall on the northern side, opposite the south wall, in memory of the two angels who said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Whosoever passes between those pillars and the wall may gain a plenary remission of sins. From thence he came to the place where the angel appeared to the shepherds, saying, "I give you tidings of great joy." And from thence to Bethlehem, where Christ was born, seven miles from Jerusalem. The place of the Nativity was of old a cave beneath the ground, and is now a house, in form four-square, cut out of the rock, and the earth dug away around it and removed. Above it a church is built, and over the place of the Nativity stands an altar above the grotto, and another portable altar is carried within the grotto when they wish to say Mass there, and after Mass is carried out again. The church over the grotto of the Nativity is a glorious building, cruciform. Having made their adoration there, they proceeded and came to a large town called Thecua, and the place where the

come into the presence of the holy Pontiff, he prostrated before him and saluted him. Then the Pastor of all people asked him to give an account of his travels, and the seven years spent by him in foreign heathen lands. Then the pilgrim and servant of Christ humbly recounted to the glorious governor of the world the story of his travels; how he had passed through various parts in his pilgrimage, and visited the place of the birth of the Lord God in Bethlehem, and of His baptism in the Jordan, and how he himself had bathed there; how he had gone to Jerusalem and holy Sion, and the place where the Saviour of men was crucified, dead, and buried, and to Mount Olivet, where He ascended into heaven; that four times he had visited Jerusalem to commend himself in prayer to God. All this he related to the Pope.

After they had thus held sweet conversation, the holy apostolic chief Pontiff seriously signified to blessed Willibald that the holy Boniface had made request to him to send him Willibald from Monte Cassino to be his assistant in the conversion of the Franks. Moreover, the Apostolic Father Gregory declared that it was his will and desire that he should go to St. Boniface. Then the athlete of Christ

promised immediate obedience so soon as he should obtain the leave of his abbot. Upon which the head of supreme authority replied that "his order was sufficient," saying, "Should I please to send anywhere the Abbot Petronax himself, he certainly would have no power nor right to disobey me." Then St. Willibald answered "that he was ready to go not only thither but wheresoever in the world he should please to send him." Then, after his converse with the Pope, St. Willibald left Rome in Easter time, having come on St. Andrew's day, but Diapert remained at Monte Cassino. And Willibald came on his way to Lucca, where his father lay buried in peace. From Lucca he came to Ticino, and then to Brixia, and from Brixia to Charinta. And the Duke Odilo of Bavaria received him in his house, and he abode a week, and then the Count Suitgar, with whom he abode a week, and the count and St. Willibald went together to Linthrat to St. Boniface. And St. Boniface sent them to Eichstadt to view the place and see how it pleased him, for Suitgar had given those lands to St. Boniface for the good of his soul. And St. Boniface gave those lands to our bishop, St. Willibald, when it was as yet all waste and no habitation there, except the little church of

St. Mary, which still stands, lesser than the other church which St. Willibald built there. And when they had remained a time there choosing a place for a monastery they returned to St. Boniface to Frisinga. And then all three went again to Eichstadt, and there St. Boniface consecrated Willibald priest, and the day of his consecration was the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, the 22nd of July. And after the space of a year St. Boniface sent for him to come to Thuringia to him, and he immediately came and lodged in the monastery of his brother Winibald, whom he had not seen for the space of nearly eighteen years, since they parted company in Rome, and they rejoiced together upon meeting again. It was autumn when he came to Thuringia, and shortly after St. Boniface, Archbishop, and Burchard and Wizo, ordained him bishop, and thus, having been raised to the summit of the priestly honour, he stayed a week, and then returned to the appointed place of his habitation.

St. Willibald was forty-one years old when he was consecrated bishop, about three weeks before Martinmas, in a place called Salpurg.

Thus ends the narrative of his journeys and his seven years' pilgrimage, all which we have endeavoured faithfully to declare, and that not

from hearsay but from his own mouth, as it was dictated to us in the monastery of Heidenheim, with two of his deacons and others present as witnesses. And this I mention that none may hereafter lightly question it. When he arrived he had three companions ; and being consecrated bishop at the ripe age of forty-one, he began to build his monastery at Eichstadt. And there he both practised himself and taught to others the holy rules of monastic life, as he had seen it observed at Monte Cassino and in other houses in his travels. And though at first the labourers were few, he sowed the seed of the holy Word and toiled for the future harvest. Being like the prudent bees, who come home from the flowers and fields laden with honey, so he imparted to others the good he had gathered by his experience in his travels.

And after he had founded the monastery, many soon came from far and near to listen to his wisdom. These he gathered as a hen gathers her chickens beneath her wing, and gave new children to the Church. They in their turn, nourished by the milk of piety, have become themselves the masters of others.

This, then, is that Willibald who, though helped by few at first, is now surrounded by

many assistant priests, and has won to the Lord much people. So that far and wide throughout Bavaria the Gospel is preached, churches are built and adorned with relics, Masses are said, psalms and antiphons are singing, holy lessons reading, and Christ's glorious miracles and the praises of the Creator are in the mouths of a multitude of the faithful.

And what shall I now say more of him who is your pastor and my master? Why speak of his piety, humility, patience, continence, meekness? Who is more strenuous than he in comforting the sorrowful, feeding the poor, clothing the naked. This is not said for the sake of vainglory, but only according to what we have seen and heard—the work of the grace of God and not of man, for, as the Apostle says, “He that glories let him glory in the Lord.” Amen.



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